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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [SENV](#) [ECON](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [XX](#)

SUBJECT: THAILAND RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR AVIAN AND PANDEMIC INFLUENZA INFORMATION

REF: A. STATE 209622

[1](#)B. BANGKOK 5626

[1](#)1. (U) Post hereby provides updated responses to second avian influenza questionnaire contained in reftel A:

A) PREPAREDNESS/COMMUNICATION

-- DOES THE GOVERNMENT HAVE A PREPAREDNESS PLAN/STRATEGY FOR PREVENTING AVIAN FLU FROM BECOMING A PANDEMIC AND CONTAINING A PANDEMIC ONCE IT OCCURS? IF THE COUNTRY HAS A STRATEGY, HOW CAPABLE IS IT OF IMPLEMENTING IT? PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY OF THE PLAN OR THE INTERNET ADDRESS FOR THE PLAN.

[1](#)2. (U) Thailand has developed and published a plan for both control of avian influenza in poultry and for a response to a human influenza pandemic. These documents are publicly available in English and Thai languages. The English plan can be accessed at <http://epid.moph.go.th/invest/ai/bird%20flu.p> df. Substantial resources have been committed to AI containment and pandemic planning. Within the limits of national resources, the Government of Thailand is capable of an effective response to a human influenza pandemic.

-- HOW TRUTHFUL WILL THE GOVERNMENT BE IN REPORTING THE SCOPE OF ANY DISEASE OUTBREAK AMONG PEOPLE? AMONG ANIMALS? WHAT INCENTIVES COULD BE OFFERED THAT WOULD LIKELY RESULT IN MORE TRANSPARENCY?

[1](#)3. (U) Over the past 12-16 months, the Government of Thailand has been increasingly transparent in reporting suspected and confirmed human cases of avian influenza. Laboratory-confirmed cases are promptly reported to WHO. Likewise, outbreaks of the infection in poultry have been promptly reported to the OIE. Incentives at the level of the government are probably not needed. The government continues to provide compensation to villagers for birds culled and this remains an important incentive to reporting bird die-offs.

-- WHERE DOES PREPARING FOR AN AVIAN FLU HUMAN PANDEMIC RANK AMONG GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES? WHO AND WHAT WOULD MOST INFLUENCE THE COUNTRY TO GIVE THE ISSUE A HIGHER PRIORITY? WHO IS THE KEY "GO-TO" PERSON, OFFICE OR DEPARTMENT (I.E. MINISTER FOR HEALTH, PRIME MINISTER, ETC.) FOR USG OFFICIALS TO ENGAGE ON THIS ISSUE?

[1](#)4. (U) This issue has the attention of the highest levels of the Thai government. The Prime Minister has been directly involved in the response and committees have been formed at various levels of the government to address the issue. Key go-to persons: Deputy Prime Minister Chaturon Chaisang and Dr. Supamitr Chunsutiwat at the Thailand Ministry of Public Health.

-- HAVE NATIONAL LAWS BEEN REVIEWED TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE INTERNATIONAL HEALTH REGULATIONS AND DO NOT POSE BARRIERS TO AVIAN INFLUENZA DETECTION, REPORTING, CONTAINMENT, OR RESPONSE?

[1](#)5. (U) Thailand participated in drafting the revised International Health Regulations. Avian influenza in humans is a notifiable (reportable) disease in Thailand. National laws pose no barriers.

-- IS THE HOST COUNTRY ALREADY WORKING WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OR OTHER COUNTRIES ON THE AVIAN FLU ISSUE? ARE GOVERNMENT LEADERS LIKELY TO ASK FOR ASSISTANCE FROM THE US OR OTHER COUNTRIES? WOULD GOVERNMENT LEADERS BE RECEPTIVE TO MESSAGES FROM US LEADERS THROUGH A BILATERAL APPROACH, AT A MULTILATERAL FORUM SUCH AS THE UN (WHO,FAO,ETC.) OR APEC, OR THROUGH BILATERAL CONTACTS BY A THIRD COUNTRY? WHAT WOULD THE COUNTRY WANT FROM THE US IN RETURN FOR ITS EFFORTS?

[1](#)6. (U) The Government of Thailand has met with numerous political representatives and maintains collaborative relationships with technical experts from several regional countries affected by avian influenza. The Government of Thailand has asked for technical assistance from the US CDC

in the past. The US CDC continues to actively collaborate on the issue, particularly by improving surveillance and laboratory diagnostic capacity. The Government of Thailand is not likely to ask for direct financial aid to address this issue but welcomes technical cooperation and assistance at different levels. Thai leaders would be receptive to messages indicating a desire of the US to support and collaborate on efforts to control AI and plan for a human pandemic with technical assistance such as advanced training in laboratory diagnostics. Thailand has taken a regional leadership role on this issue and should be recognized for this. The Government of Thailand would appreciate political and technical assistance from the US to establish and maintain a regional stockpile of antiviral drugs and personal protective equipment.

-- DOES THE COUNTRY CURRENTLY ADMINISTER ANNUAL FLU SHOTS? IF NOT, MIGHT IT CONSIDER DOING SO? WHAT IS THE PRODUCTION CAPABILITY (I.E. HOW MANY DOSES OF THE ANNUAL TRIVALENT FLU VACCINE CAN THE COUNTRY MAKE) FOR HUMAN INFLUENZA VACCINES IN THE COUNTRY? DOES THE COUNTRY PRODUCE INFLUENZA VACCINE FOR POULTRY AND IF SO HOW MUCH? IF THE COUNTRY IS DEVELOPING AN H5N1 VACCINE, WHERE IS IT IN PRODUCTION AND TESTING? ANY LICENSING ISSUES? IS THERE A LIABILITY SHIELD FOR FOREIGN MAKERS/DONORS OF VACCINES? IF NOT, ANY PROSPECTS OF ONE BEING ENACTED?

17. (U) The human seasonal influenza vaccine is available in Thailand but is not widely used. Prior to the avian influenza outbreak, fewer than 80,000 doses were used each year; this represents